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ABSTRACT

This theme issue of a newsletter for adult literacy practitioners focuses on community development. Nine articles on this topic include the following: "Adult Literacy and Community Development" (Hal Beder); "Why Community Development?" (Kirk Baker); "Freire's Revolution" (Ruth Pelz); "Impacting Communities through Literacy" (Jane Hugo); "Community Action Narratives--Developing Opportunities (CAN-DO)" (David Deshler); "Social Capital and Community Development" (D. Merrill Ewert); "Literacy Education Promotes Community Involvement: A Rural Case Study" (Desi Larson); "Lessons Learned from Local Efforts" (Janet Fitchen); and "Participatory Action Research: A Strategy for Linking Rural Literacy with Community Development" (Desi Larson, D. Merrill Ewert, and J. David Deshler). An annotated bibliography and resource list contains 16 citations. (KC)

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Literacy and Community Development Issue

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Literacy Practitioner

Literacy and Community Development Issue

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Vol. 4, No. 2
August, 1997

Adult Literacy and Community Development

Hal Beder
Rutgers University

Adult literacy education is a means to and end. Its value lies in the fact that becoming literate enables adults to reach important life goals that, without literacy, would be difficult or impossible to obtain. In the United States, we generally focus on the individual in adult literacy education. We focus on the learner—helping learners to read, write, and compute; helping learners to become more productive and independent persons. Yet there is another way to conceive of adult literacy, a way that is more commonly found in developing countries in Latin America, Africa, and Asia. That way is literacy for community development.

Rather than focusing on individuals, literacy for community development focuses on the benefits of adult literacy education to a community. The presumption is that if through collective action a community is able to solve the problems that create poverty, poor health, and oppressive conditions, all the individuals will benefit. The distinction between the individual-based concept of adult literacy education and the collective orientation of literacy for community development becomes clear when teachers are asked how they evaluate their effectiveness. In the United States, most typically teachers base the assessment of their performance on such things as learners' scores on tests and how many learners get or improve their jobs. These are individual measures of performance. Several years ago I spent a year studying community development programs in Latin America which were based on the popular education model. When I asked teachers how they assessed their success as educators, they mentioned such things as "the community built a school," or "the community established an agricultural cooperative." These are all measures of collective performance.

Although community development programs often focus on things other than adult literacy such as health and agricultural production, literacy is particularly important for two reasons. First, literacy builds community infrastructure. Reading enables community members to acquire information from print which can be used for the benefit of the community and writing allows people to communicate through print thus enabling them to share knowledge and to interact with those they cannot communicate with face-to-face. The ability to do basic math permits community members to keep records of business transactions and to compute the proper doses of medicines and pesticides.

Second, the ability to code and decode print is crucial if community members are to critically understand the social, economic, and political forces that have created the conditions the community wishes to change. Such information, which is vital to the development of an effective community action strategy, is often found in newspapers, books, reports, and correspondence.

There are two models of adult literacy for community development with which I am familiar, and they are quite compatible with each other in respect to their goals and methods. The first is often called "emancipatory literacy." The goal of emancipatory literacy is to help learners to critically understand the social forces that have created their marginalization and oppression (Freire and Macedo, 1987). This critical understanding is a precondition to strategic collective action designed to change oppressive conditions. In emancipatory adult literacy education, learners learn to decode their "world" as well as words.

"Rather than focusing on individuals, literacy for community development focuses on the benefits of adult literacy education to a community."

An example from Mexico demonstrates how this can happen. In this adult literacy education program, a learning session had two phases. In the first phase, the group of about six learners created an ongoing story about several fictitious characters. The story revolved around the problems the characters were experiencing, the causes of the problems, and possible solutions. In short, the story was an ongoing dialog designed to develop critical consciousness, something Freire called "conscientization" (Freire, 1970). Two literacy aides facilitated the story session, recorded the story, and later transcribed it. In the second phase of the instructional session, the learners used the printed story from the previous week as reading material. As their literacy levels increased, tape recording and transcription ceased and the learners wrote the stories together themselves.

In the second model, adult literacy education is provided as one component in a holistic community development program, the objective being to build capacity for effective community action as well as to promote personal well being. Frequently an emancipatory literacy model is employed, although in some cases more traditional instruction is used. In all cases, community development is stressed in instruction. PLAMAC is a literacy program in central Mexico supported by Laubach International. Members have very little disposable income to pay for emergencies and such important events as weddings, funerals, and fiestas. To deal with this problem and to teach mathematics, the members of PLAMAC began a savings program. Each week, members put a few pesos into a strong box, and four different "monitors" keep records of each person's account. Each week the four monitors meet to reconcile their accounting. When mistakes are made, and they frequently are, the monitors go over the records together, correcting each other's work and learning arithmetic in a very effective way.

"Empowerment comes from the understanding, gained through praxis, that the community knows how to solve its own problems."

Guiding Principles

In the adult literacy education for community development programs I am describing here, there are several important principles that guide program design and instruction.

Democratic Participation

It is impossible to have meaningful community action without participation. Participation means two things. First everyone must have a genuine voice in the important decisions that face the program. Second, everyone must be included in important decisions. Participation must be genuine. Learners should have a real say not only in what and how they learn but also in such things as funding and personnel decisions. This holds true for all program staff as well. Democratic participation is so important, that it is useful to establish a committee charged with monitoring the level of participation and inclusion on an ongoing basis so that when problems occur, they can be brought to the attention of all for collective solution.

Praxis

Praxis is a way of creating new knowledge in which theory informs practice and practice informs theory. It is a continuous process that leads to strategic action. Typically the process is initiated with the assistance of a facilitator who helps the community to identify its most important problems and needs. Then, through collective critical reflection, causes are identified, often with the aid of participatory research. The result is an initial theory of cause and effect. Next, an action plan is developed and implemented. The results are assessed, the knowledge gained modifies the initial theory, and the cycle begins anew. Praxis depends heavily on dialog and group reflection, and to be effective, praxis must be a collective process. In most community development programs, one result of praxis is the understanding that literacy is an important community need that should be met. When praxis is employed systematically, over time community members develop a deep understanding of their problems and needs and how to solve them. In this way, praxis functions as a cumulative knowledge production system.

Strategic Action

Because the purpose of community development is to improve the lives of community members, strategic action is paramount. In an excellent book on community development titled *Two Ears of Corn*, Bunch (1982) notes that initial action projects should be relatively simple, should be able to be accomplished in a short period of time, and should have a high prospect of significant material payoff to the community. This is so because initial success creates "buy-in" among community members and empowers them to take on more difficult and complex projects. The result of strategic action should be sustainable development, development that lasts because it can be accomplished with the resources present in the community. Donations of materials or money create dependency on the donor. This leads to development that is not sustainable, because when the benefactor leaves, the development collapses.

Empowerment

In a community development perspective, people are not empowered by others. Rather people, working together, empower

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Why Community Development?

Kirk Baker
Literacy Volunteers of Wayne County, New York

LV Wayne County is a small, rural affiliate which serves over 200 students annually. For three months out of the year, Wayne County hosts up to 3,000 migrant farm workers, primarily from Mexico and Haiti. Most of these workers are eager to learn English. While serving well over 100 ESL students each year, only about a dozen will be tutored one-to-one, as most of the migrant workers will study English in small groups.

With the recent passing of Paulo Freire, I've spent some time "re-evaluating my evaluations," as he liked to put it, on my commitment to community development. While this model has been incredibly effective in some countries, others have had undesirable results. The U.S., in my opinion, is still waiting for the radical changes that others (such as Brazil and some Central American nations) have achieved.

But I still believe the community development model is the best one to use, especially in rural New York. One reason is that our conditions are in some ways similar to those of the communities where the community development model has been successful. For instance, rural communities in our state must follow the same state and federal laws as urban ones, although most legislators unconsciously create laws based on urban assumptions. This puts us at a similar disadvantage as some impoverished rural areas in South and Central America where governments focus on developing tourism, trade, and manufacturing. In Wayne County, one sees this in the extremely underdeveloped transportation system, and in the rapid disappearance of the small and mid-sized farmer, literally driven out of business by new regulations which fit larger agribusinesses.

Also, many rural areas have fewer community resources than some urban areas. This includes transportation, child care, and access to educational institutions. There is no intra-town public transportation in Wayne County; child care is more scarce, more expensive, and of lower quality than in most cities; and Wayne County's sole source of higher education is an extension program offered by a community college in Canandaigua.

Rural communities also have many assets. Janet Fitchen, an anthropologist who studied rural societies in New York State, found that rural residents, especially those in crisis, show a multitude of strengths. Creativity, adaptability, the ability to create informal support networks, are all revealed through the way rural adults survive despite increasing poverty in rural America.

The community development model builds upon these strengths. The networks which exist in rural communities are an obvious asset. In working with migrant workers, for example, we have learned that the only effective means of advertising our program is the "grapevine." Delivering quality instruction, therefore, is a must. But the "grapevine" also allows us to accomplish amazing things. An extraordinary number of people can be warned about potential police harassment, informed of their rights, and made aware of health services just by simply telling 20 to 30 students. The word will spread. This is community development at the most basic level.

But for me, the real question is how program decision-makers and leaders can facilitate community involvement and development. I am struck by the incredible amount of power we give to one group to create and manage educational programs for another. Lately, we recognized that all of the members of our board had bachelor's degrees; many had master's. If we are to create "student-centered, customer-driven" programs, which "empower" students and promote "community involvement," then why aren't students making program decisions along with those of us who have benefited from the traditional educational system?

It was this dichotomy, more than anything else, which led to the election of a student to our board. After all, while many students may not yet have the skills to make contacts, create databases, or organize systems, those things are really just legwork; the decisions are made by the directors. One of the stages of community development is bringing together all of the stakeholders. It makes sense that we should have representation from both the traditionally-educated and the alternatively-educated on our board.

Recently, we had our first students' club meeting to discuss leadership positions. No one knows what the ultimate result will be: a pro-active student club operating alongside the board, a student advisory group with minimal board representation, or a board dominated and driven by students. All are possible implementations of a model based on utilizing existing resources and capitalizing on existing strengths. This, after all, is the basic premise of the community development model, that success depends on the leadership of the community, not on the organization or people providing services.

There are signs that the community development model is winning more acceptance. We now have a President who declares he is committed to the process. A young, naive employee of a small, rural not-for-profit (such as myself) is asked to contribute his thoughts on literacy and community development. And people that I know, people all over, are beginning to say things like, "If we all put our heads together, I'm sure we could do something about it."

Paulo Freire 1921-1997

Influential adult educator, Paulo Freire, died in Rio de Janeiro on May 2, 1997, at the age of 75. The legacy he leaves behind is his powerful pedagogy which has influenced many "grass roots" organizations around the world.

Freire was exiled from his native Brazil during a military coup in 1964 for his literacy work among the rural poor. In Chile he continued his "pedagogy of the oppressed," and later with the World Council of Churches in Geneva he traveled extensively lecturing and assisting educational programs in newly independent countries around the world. In 1969, he taught at Harvard University and later returned to Brazil to assume a faculty position at the University of Sao Paulo. More recently, he was appointed Minister of Education for the City of Sao Paulo where he had responsibility for guiding school reform.

The article below gives a brief description of Freire's educational methodology. For more information, consult the resources listed in the bibliography which follows.

Freire's Revolution

Ruth Pelz

Twenty-five years ago educator Paulo Freire was jailed and exiled from his native Brazil for teaching methods considered subversive by that nation's new military dictatorship. Now Freire (pronounced "fray-EE-ray") is widely acknowledged as one of the most influential figures in adult education worldwide. During the last quarter century, he helped develop literacy programs in Chile, Guinea Bissau, Nicaragua, and several other nations; taught briefly at Harvard University; and served as consultant for the Department of Education of the World Council of Churches in Geneva. Invited back to Brazil after the country's return to democracy in 1980, he was director of education in Sao Paulo, its largest city.

Freire's work has been translated into many languages (his best known book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, was first published in English in 1970) and has been adapted to a wide variety of contexts, both in and out of the classroom. The heart of the "metodo Paulo Freire" is dialogue; teacher and students must be equally involved in a process of investigating the problems of the world together.

When a Freirean team of educators enters a community, they begin by identifying key social issues and the emotion-laden words that call these issues to mind. Those "generative" words then form the basis of the first literacy lessons. In one current program in urban Brazil, for example, the selected word was "mud." Makeshift housing had been constructed on steep hillsides, and with no streets or stairways, people were literally slipping and sliding through life. In learning to read the letters that form the Portuguese word for mud (and rhyming words), students began not only the decoding of written language but an active investigation into their lives.

The next steps involve assembling drawings, posters, or color slides that illustrate the selected situations (e.g. muddy hillsides) and preparing an agenda for the program and appropriate teaching materials (e.g., cards showing the phonemic families of words suggested by the generative words). Then "the team of educators is ready to re-present to the people their own thematics...which have come from the people [and] return to them—not as contents to be deposited but as problems to be solved" (Freire).

The goal of the discussions which ensue is not simply to teach students to read—although Freire's highly motivating methods prove extraordinarily successful in this task—but also to achieve what he calls "conscientization." This term, which some English speakers translate as "consciousness raising," refers to the students' development of a critical understanding of society and an awareness of their ability to change it.

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This early work details Freire's pedagogy of liberation which he developed in Brazil and Chile.

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In this text, Freire reflects on his experiences with adult educators around the world and reexamines his fundamental themes.

Elias, J. L. (1994). *Paulo Freire: Pedagogue of liberation*. Malabar, FL: Kreiger Press.
An analysis of the major influences on Freire's methodology and writings.

Heaney, T. (Available July 1997). *Paulo Freire* [Online- National Louis University, Department of Adult and Continuing Education : http://nlu.nl.edu/ace/Resources/Freire.html]
Detailed description of Freirean pedagogy with glossary of frequently used terms such as "critical consciousness" and "dialogical method."

Mackie, R. (Ed.). (1981). *Literacy and revolution: The pedagogy of Paulo Freire*. New York: Continuum Publishing Company.
This collection of essays seeks to present a "penetrating, constructive, and critical explication" of Freire's theory by carefully considering its origins and outcomes in their historical contexts.

Nixon-Ponder, S. (1995). Using problem-posing dialogue in adult literacy education. *Adult Learning*, 7(2), pp.10-12.
Nixon-Ponder briefly describes the roots of problem-posing as educational methodology. She then provides a five-step guide to its usage as well as two case studies describing her own implementation of the methodology.

Impacting Communities Through Literacy

Although the roots of literacy education for community development are in the efforts of educators such as Paulo Freire, in the U.S. there are many successful programs that have applied the principles of community development. The following are a few examples.

Women in Literacy, U.S.A.
Jane Hugo, Laubach Literacy Action
Syracuse, New York

The literacy work supported by the International Division of Laubach Literacy grows out of a belief that literacy is a fundamental tool for peaceful social change. Laubach's long international experience has underscored the key role women play in transforming communities hemmed in by poverty, poor health, racism, crime, and environmental degradation.

The Women in Literacy/USA component of the decade long global campaign began in 1994. Since then, Laubach Literacy Action has been awarding grants directly to community groups that place women's basic education at the center of solving individual and community problems.

Through these grants, women will use improved literacy or English language skills to tackle issues such as health problems, unemployment or underemployment, domestic violence, workers' rights, women's roles in American society, the connections between health and economic problems, and the reclamation of a neighborhood. Programs receiving grants incorporate four elements that come together in literacy for social change efforts:

1) **basic skills development**—learning the reading, writing, speaking, listening, and math skills needed to reach personal or community goals
2) **critical thinking**—learning how to ask questions and seek answers; digging below the surface of issues to identify root causes and important connections between issues; and posing solutions to problems
3) **action**— participating in group projects that raise awareness, foster analysis of strengths and problems, and test solutions to community issues and
4) **cultural expression**—celebrating the culture of a community through the arts, history, preservation of positive traditions, or the teaching of native languages.

WIL/USA grants support literacy for social change in the context of women's lives. Programs receiving grants in 1997 include:

The Literacy Project, Inc., Greenfield, MA. Students will organize and run the "Women Connecting Through Health and Economics Conference." The two-day event will allow the Literacy Project, in collaboration with other local agencies which have identified health and economics as priorities, to analyze issues and develop action plans.

Lutheran Social Mission Society/Lutheran Settlement House (LSH), Philadelphia, PA. The Sheppard Community Parents Association and the LSH will help women in the Association and the Sheppard Adult Basic Education class to develop their community leadership and educational skills. The women will use these new skills to deal with community issues they confront in West Kensington, an impoverished area of north Philadelphia. By the end of the first year, the women will choose a community project to work on together in the second year. Educational skills to deal with daily problems the students confront—inadequate housing, domestic violence, lack of employment, and stress—will be developed for use in the GED curriculum.

Over the next three years, Laubach will work with two types of organizations: experienced women-centered programs and organizations that have recently begun to ask how they can integrate basic skills development, critical thinking, action projects, and cultural expression elements in their work with women. For more information on Women in Literacy/USA, contact Jane Hugo, Literacy Instruction Coordinator, (315) 422-9121.

Community Technology Centers' Network
Newton, Massachusetts

CTCNet is a network of agencies and programs that offers technology access and education to people who might otherwise not enjoy such opportunities. CTCNet provides resources to its members by linking affiliates electronically, by offering national partnerships and collaborations, and by sponsoring national and regional meetings.

CTCNet is based upon the achievements of Playing to Win, Inc. (PTW), a 16 year-old nonprofit originating in Harlem, New York, and nationally recognized as a pioneer and leading advocate of equitable access to computer-based technologies. PTW and the Network, which was first established under its auspices, were built upon the principles that technology is a tool to help participants achieve their own goals; students work collaboratively as much as individually and learn as much from play as from work; teachers are facilitators, resources, and participants in the learning process; and curriculum is project-based.

The PTW Harlem Center has provided a range of computer-based learning and exploring opportunities since 1983, and in 1990 the National Science Foundation (NSF) provided PTW with funding to help establish a network of 45 centers across the eastern United States. The Network provides a variety of on-site, telephone, and electronic technical assistance and support with regional coordinators as well as central staff; hosts regional and annual all-affiliates conferences; and has numerous corporate and organizational collaborations and special resources in the areas of science, math, and technology for those ordinarily disenfranchised from such opportunities.

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Community Action Narratives – Developing Opportunities (CAN-DO)

David Deshler
Department of Education
Cornell University

"So, if we were to design a way forward, thinking outside that old box, how would we go about it? Wouldn't we start with what people who are actual or potential learners think, rather than what agencies think?... Wouldn't we start with communities and not individuals? Wouldn't we address social ills directly, rather than in some trickle down fashion expecting education to counter them indirectly?"

– Juliet Merrifield[1]

A Community Development Approach to Literacy Education

"Helping individual learners to read and write is important, but is it enough?" This question has haunted many literacy volunteers and LVA state and national staff. In 1993, Literacy Volunteers of America, New York State (LVA, NYS) and Cornell University partners (Department of Education, Department of Human Service Studies, the Community and Rural Development Institute, and Cornell Cooperative Extension) began a Rural Literacy Initiative to explore ways that community development and current literacy efforts could be combined to address some of the root causes of rural poverty: isolation, unemployment, and lack of respect and full participation in community decisions. A symposium in 1993 and a conference in 1994 brought together researchers and practitioners to share project findings and to examine the challenges of developing successful rural literacy programs while addressing community development needs.

"The language experience approach...can contribute directly to community development by increasing awareness of specific community issues through learners' descriptions of their experiences."

Community Action Narratives—Developing Opportunities (CAN-DO), is an experiment that is a next step in joining literacy education with community development. The major ingredients that gave rise to the CAN-DO experiment have been drawn from several sources: (1) the language experience approach, (2) critical literacy, and (3) participatory action research.

The first major ingredient comes from the success that LVA volunteers have had with the *language experience approach* to beginning reading instruction. In language experience, a story or experience is dictated by the learner and written down by the tutor providing the content for reading lessons. In this way, the learner's own experiences and spoken language become the basis for instruction. As stories are read back to learners, they hear and see the words that they have spoken, thereby improving their reading through content that is most familiar and interesting to them.

This approach could be expanded, through a CAN-DO effort, from focusing on individual experiences to possible corporate responses when the stories are focused on a single community issue, like work and employment, welfare-to-work, health, transportation etc., and shared with others. Since the stories are written and can be distributed, they can then be analyzed by groups of citizens for identifying potential opportunities for community action. Some of the stories may be published so many others can become informed by voices that otherwise may not have been heard. The language experience approach, when used this way, can contribute directly to community development by increasing awareness of specific community issues through learners' descriptions of their experiences of them.

The second major ingredient comes from what is know as *critical literacy*. In many literacy programs around the world, literacy efforts are frequently combined with community development as groups of people gather data about their villages, health and nutrition, agriculture, and markets. In most of these efforts, people focus on political, economic, social, and cultural analysis. Learning to write and to read is a part of the process of critical analysis. Emphasis is placed on writing about community conditions and plans to change them. Individuals are helped to read and write; however, the focus is on collective action to benefit the total community.

The CAN-DO experiment is informed by this approach when groups of citizens come together to hear the stories produced by partners about a specific community issue such as work and employment. They listen for themes, common experiences, implications for policy changes, and construct new aspirations, opportunities, and visions of the future. As they listen to one another's experiences, they may come to understand what has to change to make life more just, equal, and fair. Critical literacy happens as groups of people challenge past assumptions, presuppositions, and habits of the mind that have led them to accept intolerable situations. Helping individuals to read and write is an important part of the process; however, as groups of people understand why community situations are the way they are, they may be better equipped to construct plans for changing them together.

The third major ingredient comes from *participatory action research* (PAR). This approach arose from attempts by

[1] This quote was retrieved from an e-mail message from Juliet Merrifield of the Highlander Research and Education Center, now on sabatical leave in Brighton England.

organizational leaders, social science researchers, and adult educators to democratize research in the interest of positive social and organizational change. In participatory action research, the participants decide the focus of the research, investigate issues themselves, analyze and interpret data, and undertake action together to improve the situation.

PAR has become an important element in community development, because the results of development efforts are often improved through the participation of those who experience community problems directly. Changes that are suggested by the research are more likely to be supported by those who have contributed to the findings. The PAR approach also may be used to follow up on specific knowledge needs that arise from the analysis of personal narratives. Citizens who undertake PAR also learn how to do their own research and become less dependent on outside experts to solve their problems. Citizens gain direct access to knowledge which no longer is controlled and interpreted only by experts. The CAN-DO experiment incorporates these ideas, by having rural people themselves generate knowledge about local problems. Stories become data for community people to analyze, interpret, and use as the basis for corporate action.

"Helping individuals to read and write is an important part of the process; however, as groups of people understand why community situations are the way they are, they may be better equipped to construct plans for changing them together."

LVA's Assets for a CAN-DO Community Development Approach

For many years, LVA volunteers have been concerned about their communities as well as individual learners. Through their contacts with learners, many have experienced their own "consciousness raising" regarding the conditions and experiences of those with whom they have worked. These partnerships often have served as community bridges for communication and understanding across class and racial barriers. Tutors often acknowledge that learning is a two-way street.

The CAN-DO approach builds on these assets by explicitly engaging both tutors and literacy learners in partnerships to construct knowledge about their common communities. Literacy learners share with volunteers their knowledge of community issues as experienced from the "grass roots." Literacy volunteers, because they often have connections with decision-makers and other citizens, can assist in mobilizing public support for community development action. This is a new role for literacy volunteers; however, the failure to recognize this opportunity may mean that underlying conditions go unrecognized and unaddressed thereby continuing the status quo which often fails to provide new opportunities for those whom the program was originally intended to help.

Adult Literacy and Community Development *continued from page 2*

themselves. Empowerment comes from the understanding, gained through praxis, that the community knows how to solve its own problems. Empowerment comes from the pride of accomplishment.

Applications

For Literacy Volunteers of America, a community development approach has at least two potential applications. At the instructional level, literacy tutoring could be provided as part of comprehensive community development efforts. Literacy acquisition would thus support development of the community as well as benefit individual learners. Furthermore, because the learners were engaged in the community development project, the knowledge they gained through praxis could support improvement of the tutoring effort. Such an effort might prove to be even more effective if both the tutors and the learners were involved in the same community development project.

Second, a community development approach has great potential for staff development and tutor training. Many LVA tutors are relatively isolated in respect to their literacy work and this isolation prevents collective problem solving and knowledge accumulation through praxis. If LVA tutors were organized into a "community" which itself functioned according to the principles described here, many of the problems tutors experience in common might be solved and tutors might gain an important source of emotional and moral support as well.

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Social Capital and Community Development

D. Merrill Ewert, Associate Professor
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The idea that people can improve their communities through educational programs is probably as old as human history. What has changed is our understanding of education and the role adult educators play in this process. A review of community development practice over the past few decades suggests that we have experienced at least three different phases. The first attempted to build communities through the formation of *physical capital*. The second focused on *human capital* as a development strategy. Today, some social scientists promote the creation of *social capital* as a way of solving local problems. I will briefly review these three phases and suggest some implications for adult educators interested in building social capital and strengthening communities.

"Engaging people in reflection not only leads to new ways of thinking about local problems but also mobilizes people for community action."

Physical Capital

The success of the Marshall Plan in rebuilding Europe and Japan following World War II gave development planners tremendous confidence in their ability to improve society. The emergence of Japan and the reemergence of Germany as industrial powers seemed to provide clear evidence that capital investment in infrastructure—roads, transportation systems, business, and industry—leads to improvements for ordinary people and local communities. In this context, policy makers designed educational programs to develop skills that enhance productivity in an industrial society.

Governments and aid agencies around the world developed agricultural extension and vocational education programs designed to increase agricultural production and improve the quality of life. Although the introduction of hybrid seeds, fertilizers, irrigation, and simple technologies was expected to foster a "green revolution," success was mixed. Production increased. So did social inequality as people with access to land, credit, and markets often succeeded at the expense of the poor. Planners celebrated economic growth, but many observers noted the high social costs. The postwar boom strengthened domestic economies in North America as well, but communities and neighborhoods began to fragment in response to changing social and economic forces. The concern with physical capital overlooked the challenges of human development and learning.

Human Capital

The emergence of newly independent nations in Africa and Latin America during the 1960s signaled a new emphasis on education and the development of skills. Some nations promoted adult education as a strategy for mobilizing the poor and marginalized on behalf of local and national goals. In the U.S., President Johnson's War on Poverty and the burgeoning civil rights movement led to unprecedented investments in adult education and training.

Planners referred to the development of knowledge and skills as investments in human capital. This emphasis on "functional skills" promoted a deficit model of adult education in which learners—believed to be deficient in important ways—acquired new skills that would enable them to participate more fully in the marketplace. In spite of high expectations, neither schools nor adult education programs did much to solve the social and economic problems of society. Meanwhile, large corporations (e.g., Motorola) developed massive employee training programs to improve their own competitiveness in the global marketplace.

Social Capital

Programs designed to promote physical and human capital did little to improve conditions in local communities. The failure of people to cooperate for mutual benefit intensified the problem but led social scientists from various disciplines to suggest a new diagnosis. Instead of defining the problem in terms of inadequate technology or a skills deficit, some observers now see the basic issue as the lack of social capital—social networks, norms, trust, and cooperation for mutual benefit[1] (Putnam, 1993a).

Putnam's study of civic traditions in Italy, *Making Democracy Work* (1993b), showed that people in the northern part of the country were far more effective in solving local problems than people in the south. Communities in the north reflected much stronger patterns of civic engagement—voting, membership in choral associations, participation in civic organizations, high levels of newspaper readership—along with higher levels of trust, community solidarity, and integrity. Democracy, Putnam found, worked better in these civic areas than it did elsewhere.

"The idea that people can solve their own problems by working together has deep roots in adult education and community development."

Putnam (1993a) concluded that the presence of norms, relationships, social networks, and trust within a community promotes cooperation that leads to economic growth and effective government. Communities that exhibit high social capital have

[1] For further reading on the concept of social capital, consult the following World Wide Web sites: http://www.epn.org/prospect/19/19schw.html, http://epn.org/prospect/24/24putn.html, http://www.cpn.org/COI/coi_model.html

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Literacy Education Promotes Community Involvement: A Rural Case Study

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Overview

Thousands of adults participate in literacy programs. Although there have been a number of studies on the impact of education on individuals, research on how improved literacy skills impact the larger community is scarce. To gain an in-depth understanding of the social ramifications of literacy education, I recently completed a study in which I examined the community involvement that resulted from adult learners' participation in literacy education. I used analysis of participants' perceptions of the effects of literacy education on their lives. After outlining the context for this study and research methods used, I highlight some key findings regarding increased community involvement of learners and discuss the practical implications of these findings for literacy providers.

Context of the Study

Many families living in rural, isolated, and poverty stricken regions in the United States face various barriers that limit their access to community and educational resources. Since the late 1960s, rural communities in the US have undergone drastic economic and social transformations as a result of de-industrialization (Fitchen, 1991). International competition in resource-based industries, a decline in blue-collar jobs, and the increasing number of working poor families all contribute to a changing rural landscape. Although exact statistics are unavailable, rural illiteracy rates in the US (and elsewhere in the world) are believed to be higher than those in urban areas (Spears, 1993).

Research Design

The question that framed this study was: "How has adult literacy education contributed to building social networks and community involvement for learners within the context of rural communities?" To answer this question, I interviewed learners, tutors, adult educators, and administrators of two rural literacy programs. The programs, one a Literacy Volunteers of America affiliate and the other an Even Start Family Literacy program, represent two approaches to nonformal adult literacy education: an individual-based model and an intergenerational model.

Data was collected from January 1996 through January 1997 using face-to-face interviews, focus group interviews, document reviews, observations, and surveys. I interviewed eighteen and surveyed thirty-four literacy learners. Five tutors, four adult educators, and four program administrators were also interviewed. All learners live in rural areas and most were white. Learners were 19 to 63 years in age; over seventy percent were women. Most of the learners that I interviewed were employed, although many were employed part-time and looking for better jobs. Three of the learners interviewed are involved in one-on-one tutoring, while the remainder participate in group literacy education settings including computer literacy, GED preparation, parenting skills, or other literacy competencies.

Key Finding: Increased Community Involvement

Studying the effects of any educational program is problematic, particularly in the short-term. The findings outlined here are preliminary and more research is needed to confirm, define, and expand them. However, every literacy learner I spoke with, as well as those surveyed, indicated that as a result of their experience, they were involved in their communities in new and different ways. Many learners described themselves as "isolated" from their communities before becoming involved with the literacy program.

New Social Networks - Learners developed social networks and relationships at a number of levels. When I asked these adult learners what they especially liked about the literacy program, many of their responses focused on the supportive and trusting relationships they had developed with adult educators and other program participants. Everyone I talked with in the study discussed the importance of the learner/tutor relationship. Diana, a literacy volunteer, described literacy education as much more than teaching skills but also as ". . . helping people to cope with life."[1] As one program administrator said, ". . . I think the way that we work best is to provide really caring, well-trained volunteers. . . the tutoring situation provides a benefit besides learning to read. [Learners] get the kind of support from another adult to help them really find other resources."

"For the learners, supportive and trusting relationships with their tutors provided the foundation for developing self-esteem and confidence, for gaining access to community resources and information, and for becoming more involved in their local communities."

One of the students interviewed told me that Literacy Volunteers is "people who care to help other people learn." Learners in both programs used the word "support" to describe the programs and educators. For the learners, supportive and trusting relationships with their tutors provided the foundation for developing self-esteem and confidence, for gaining access to community resources and information, and for becoming more involved in their local communities. Ninety percent of the learners

[1] All names have been changed to protect anonymity. All quotes are verbatim responses from interviews conducted in 1996.

surveyed, and all of the learners interviewed, reported that they had made new friends within the program. Forty-four percent of learners surveyed indicated that they have learned to "get along better with people" since participating in the program.

From interviews as well as surveys, I learned that adult learners have made a number of personal changes as a result of their involvement with literacy education. Some of these include: setting personal goals, being more assertive, controlling anger, exercising more, and cutting down on drinking and smoking — all of which resulted in increased self-esteem.

"Every literacy learner I spoke with ... indicated that as a result of their experience, they were involved in their communities in new and different ways."

Community Involvement - In addition to these personal changes, many of the learners I talked with are involved with their communities in new ways as a result of their literacy education. Ninety-three percent of learners surveyed in the Even Start program indicated that they were now aware of valuable community resources. Open-ended responses included, "I can't believe all the things I've learned!" and "I never knew all the resources available!!"

One learner I interviewed is now singing with his church choir because he can read. Another learner has joined the nutrition committee at her son's elementary school. Learners with children are more involved with their children's schools and education as a result of their experiences with literacy education.

Improving Rural Literacy Education - When I asked program participants how they thought rural literacy education could be improved, their suggestions included 1) increase the availability of reading level appropriate reading materials, 2) increase collaborations with other community organizations, 3) advertise more and let more people know about the programs, and 4) increase access to adult education by providing classes more frequently. Although access to adult education was particularly an issue for working parents, one of the biggest concerns for learners was transportation. Many of the adult learners I interviewed (over fifty percent) do not own a car and rely on others for transportation.

Summary

The effects of literacy education on community involvement are as diverse as the learners themselves. These effects include 1) development of relationships and social networks, 2) decreased sense of isolation, 3) increased access to community resources, and 4) increased involvement in local institutions, in particular schools, churches, and social service agencies.

Literacy programs helped to remove barriers to community involvement by promoting self-esteem and confidence, and providing access to community resources. In order to develop and implement adult education programs that promote community involvement and change, as well as basic skills, more studies regarding the impact of literacy education on the community are called for. Historically, literacy education in the US has been evaluated primarily on the basis of the impact on individual learners. Findings from this study indicate that the effect of literacy education on community involvement is significant and should be included in learner and program assessment.

The results of this study, as well as other research, suggest that adult literacy professionals should focus on three directions in literacy education:

1) shift the focus from individuals and institutions to families and communities,
2) recognize the role of existent knowledge in the creation of knowledge, and
3) promote multilevel collaboration (Weinstein-Shr 1993).

Communities also need to know more about the literacy programs and services that are offered. Both adult literacy and community development programs need to continue to emphasize the importance of formal and informal social networks. To be effective, rural literacy programs must address local needs, satisfy the expectations of learners, build cooperative links with other local social service agencies, and focus on the benefits of programs to the learners (Spears, 1993).

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The Legacy of Janet Fitchen

Editor's Note: Janet M. Fitchen was an associate professor of anthropology at Ithaca College. She frequently led workshops and discussions on rural issues, and in 1994 she was the keynote speaker at the LVA–NYS/Cornell University Rural Literacy and Community Development Conference. Her book, *Endangered Spaces, Enduring Places: Change, Identity, and Survival in Rural America*, from which the following excerpt was taken, is based on years of field observations and hundreds of interviews in fifteen rural counties in upstate New York. In her book she argues that, with appropriate policies and programs, most rural communities could adapt creatively to change, integrate around a new identity, and survive into the twenty-first century. Dr. Fitchen's insights into the struggles, and successes, of rural communities leave an enduring impact on the field of community development. After a brief illness, Janet Fitchen passed away in 1995. The following introduction was contributed by Paul Eberts, Professor of Rural Sociology and Director of the Community and Rural Development Institute, Cornell University, a friend and colleague of Dr. Fitchen.

I doubt there was anyone who did not appreciate Janet Fitchen. Her ebullient spirit, her quick and insightful responses on virtually all social issues concerning rural people, and her fundamental, yet grounded, humanity endeared her to all of us.

All these things were present the last time I saw Janet (she was somewhat embarrassed to be called Dr. Fitchen), on the Friday before her diagnosis when she attended our department seminar, as she almost always did. In other words, just several weeks before her passing, when she was having not very severe, though constant, headaches, she still showed these marvelous personal qualities.

Her ebullience, insights, and basic humanity are also seen in the excerpt following this brief introduction. Although she knew that rural places were "endangered," as the title of her last book documented, she also saw that some few people in these communities can and do overcome these obstacles. Her presentation at the Rural Literacy and Community Development Conference several years ago ended with the same theme.

Although we all miss her greatly, we are glad she was part of our lives, and are enriched by having her with us through our memories of her and her words.

Lessons Learned from Local Efforts

Janet Fitchen

It can be done....Specific community needs can be met, even in rural areas, even as needs are growing and changing. The rural can-do philosophy is a major asset that goes a long way to devising and implementing innovative solutions to community service needs....Effective rural programs utilize a lot of local talent and a commonsense approach supplemented by judicious use of outside or professional help when needed and appropriate. Creative individuals at the head of agencies, some of them long-term residents, others recent arrivals, can accomplish a great deal in rural communities to move human services out of service delivery ruts and into a proactive mode.

Local efforts to meet particular needs can also be very effective in building community problem-solving capacity if the process of resolving a problem is given at least as much attention as the product. In a process-oriented approach, there is more opportunity to build up and build on local strengths. It can also be used to broaden community participation, loosening decision making and planning from the grip of professionals who provide the services....Even where impetus or funding for a program does come from outside, whether state or federal government, exciting results are most likely to happen when plenty of allowance is made for rural initiative and innovativeness rather than handing down a preformulated program.

"The lessons drawn from these community examples point to some key benefits of...community development in which local talents and local ideas are given free rein to design and implement community-appropriate solutions to the community's own problems."

Some of the most exciting programs operating in rural communities are aimed not only at the service needs of individuals, but at supporting the community and institutional structure to enable it to do a better job, both informally and formally, in meeting the needs of members. Greatest lasting effectiveness comes from enabling existing community networks and institutions to improve the total social environment of the community rather than simply increasing local people's dependence on services being provided from the outside. Emphasizing the problem-solving capacity in existing institutions and the community-building aspects of meeting local needs can also help to avoid the fragmentation of services among agencies and institutions. In areas with small populations, changing local needs, and decreasing outside funding, fragmentation and turf battles among service-providing groups are unaffordable. Additionally, these divisions are anticommunity in that they prevent community publics from effectively getting involved in designing, funding, and overseeing their own services.

The lessons drawn from these community examples point to some key benefits of the capacity-building, problem-solving kind of community development in which local talents and local ideas are given free rein to design and implement community-appropriate solutions to the community's own problems. This is a broader and more lasting concept of rural community development than the sometimes narrow focus that concentrates only on physical infrastructure and on economic development, such as building roads and attracting factories. It is a concept of rural community development that emphasizes institutional infrastructure and social development, and that enables a community to become more effective in attacking such specific problems as physical infrastructure and economic development. It enhances the community's ability to meet its own needs.

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Social Capital and Community Development *continued from page 8*

greater potential for sustainable development than those with low social capital (Flora, 1995). Building social capital contributes to economic prosperity by promoting collaboration and collective action on behalf of a shared vision for a democratic society. The idea that people can solve their own problems by working together has deep roots in adult education and community development. However, the importance of participation has often been ignored by planners and policy makers who seek to impose national solutions to local problems.

Implications for Adult Education

Recent calls to renew democracy and strengthen local communities come from many places. President Clinton's proposals for job-training and industrial extension agencies suggest a concern with building social capital (Putnam, 1993a). Gardner points to a wave of innovation in grassroots problem-solving as a sign of renewal but calls for rebuilding a sense of community, devolving political power, and promoting citizen action and community service (1994). Sirianni and Friedland cite examples of grassroots organizations that lead to innovation and learning (1997), and argue for collaborative learning as an asset-based approach to community development.

An asset-based approach to community development, however, requires new ways of thinking about people—about their problems, their potential, and their relationships to each other and with their communities. Freire's concept of conscientization (1971) and Mezirow's theory of transformational learning both show how engaging people in reflection not only leads to new ways of thinking about local problems but also mobilizes people for community action. Social learning can build trust, increase hope, and promote civic engagement in ways that renew democracy, strengthen communities, and solve local problems. Adult educators can facilitate that process by stimulating critical reflection, promoting community participation, and documenting the process of social learning. That can be our contribution to building social capital and strengthening local communities.

"Adult educators can facilitate the process [of community development] by stimulating critical reflection, promoting community participation, and documenting the process of social learning."

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Participatory Action Research: A Strategy for Linking Rural Literacy with Community Development

Desi Larson, D. Merrill Ewert, J. David Deshler- Cornell University
Summary of paper presented to the 1996 World Conference on Literacy, Philadelphia, PA

Participatory Action Research (PAR) is a strategy through which communities or groups define their own problems, gather and analyze relevant data, and propose and implement actions designed to transform their community and improve the lives of individuals. People who have been marginalized become aware of their inherent capacity and recognize their own resources as they conduct research on the problems and issues in their lives. This process is scientific in that community participation in the research process facilitates a more accurate and authentic analysis of social reality. However, it goes beyond the generation of knowledge by actually mobilizing groups and communities to transform that reality through specific actions.

Through the implementation of PAR, the Rural Literacy Initiative hopes to establish a literacy-community development link. Phase 1 of the Initiative consisted of focus group discussions with adult literacy learners, LVA tutors, and community leaders in four counties in New York State. In Phase 2, groups of learners in two counties reviewed the findings generated by the focus groups in Phase 1, analyzed the implications for literacy education, and proposed strategies by which local problems and development issues could be addressed though literacy education in their own communities. Phase 3 of the Initiative will examine how engaging learners in creating curricula can also mobilize them to participate in the social and economic development of their communities.

The Problem of Linkage/Defining the Link

Community development and literacy education programs share many underlying values and goals. However, several factors have limited the extent to which adult literacy and community development issues have been addressed together in systematic and coherent ways. These include (1) disciplinary barriers—a lack of interdisciplinary communication regarding the link between learning and social change is present in both community development and adult education, and (2) paradigmatic barriers—the fields of adult education and community development both encompass conflicts over the nature of the task and how it should be implemented. Both community development and adult literacy education contain diverse epistemological schools of thought including liberal-progressive and structural critiques. An analysis of these camps suggests that the objectives of liberal-progressive community development and adult literacy education programs speak past each other. Critical adult literacy and community development approaches, on the other hand, are compatible and parallel, focusing beyond individual and economic growth to social, political, and structural concerns.

Participatory Action Research and Rural Literacy Education

We propose that the possibility of realizing a link between literacy and community development is enhanced by the compatibility of both these fields with PAR. The link between adult literacy education and community development can be most clearly articulated through the process of PAR which seeks to link social analysis with individual learning and transformation. A PAR informed literacy-community development project would aim to help learners transform their stories into text—which could then be used to teach basic skills, and build a deeper social understanding within the community. Volunteer tutors thus become co-learners, gaining new insights regarding local rural conditions and becoming more critically reflective of their own society. PAR can provide the conceptual and practical bridge between rural literacy and community development by defining the content of the literacy program, involving learners in creating the curriculum, engaging non-reading adults in the community process, and repositioning tutors as co-learners in the literacy education enterprise. In a PAR context, literacy tutors play new roles, becoming learners, facilitators, advocates, and catalysts.

PAR methodologies have the potential to facilitate more interdisciplinary work amongst researchers, as well as a better flow of information and knowledge generation by creating more networks and social relationships. As rural areas continue to find themselves struggling with educational and social crises, critical literacy education informed by a PAR methodology may provide a conduit for education at the community and public levels, as well as the individual level.

"The link between adult literacy education and community development can be most clearly articulated through the process of PAR which seeks to link social analysis with individual learning and transformation."

The full text of the paper presented to the 1996 World Conference on Literacy may be found on the Rural Literacy Initiative Homepage (http://www.cals.cornell.edu:80/cals/dept/education/larson/lvapub.html). For more information on Participatory Action Research, consult the list of resources found in "From the Editor's Desk."

From the Editor's Desk

Since 1991, Literacy Volunteers of New York State and Cornell University have been exploring the link between rural literacy education and community development. Through surveys, focus groups, and conferences, the Rural Literacy and Community Development Initiative has heard from a wide range of voices- learners, tutors, trainers, staff, and scholars from a variety of academic fields.

As a result of the discussion, an important need has emerged for new ways to think about and provide literacy education in the context of a rapidly changing rural landscape. In addition to literacy and adult education, fields of inquiry that continue to provide valuable insights include participatory (or popular) education, participatory action research, and community development. If you would like to know more about any of these areas, or if you would like to participate in the ongoing discussion, you may want to pursue some of the following resources.

Participatory Approaches to Literacy Education

Resources in Print

Auerbach, E., et.al. (1996). *From the community to the community: A guidebook for participatory literacy training.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

This work serves as a guidebook and manual for individuals interested in participatory approaches to literacy education. Based upon a project in Boston, this multi-author book provides a step-by-step resource, guiding the reader from context and rationale straight through to final evaluation and future strategies.

Beder, H. (1996). Popular education: An appropriate educational strategy for community-based organizations. In R. G. Brockett, & S. Imel, (Eds.). *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 70. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

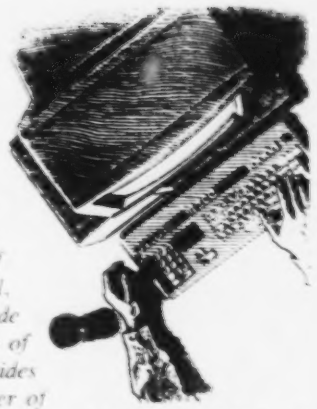
This chapter defines popular education and offers advice to community-based organizations that wish to establish popular education programs.

Fingeret, A., & Jurmo, P. (Eds.). (1989). Participatory literacy education. *New Directions for Continuing Education*, 42. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

This collection of articles provides a framework for thinking about learner participation in adult literacy education programs. It offers descriptions of programs that have made active learner involvement central to a variety of practices, and gives recommendations for development of the participatory approach as a major force within the adult literacy field in the United States.

Rosow, L.V. (1995). *In forsaken hands: How theory empowers literacy learners.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Publishing.

This book is written for anyone involved in the teaching of literacy to adult learners—tutors, trainers, literacy professionals, etc. The author, a long time tutor and literacy educator with LVA, uses case histories, stories, and practical examples to introduce the reader to the theories and definitions of literacy from a functional, contextualized perspective. Aside from providing a philosophy of literacy education, this book guides the reader through a number of useful methods and applications relevant to functional, learner-centered approaches to literacy.



Other Resources

The Jubilee Popular Education Center offers workshops in educational design and teaching skills. Contact the Jubilee Popular Education Center, Inc., 1221 Moultrie Court, Raleigh, NC 27615, Phone: 919-847-3804, Fax: 919-870-0599; e-mail Jubileenc@AOL.com.

Participatory Action Research

Resources in print

Brown, L.D. (1985). People-centered development and participatory research. *Harvard Educational Review, 55(1).*

Brown critiques traditional approaches to development, which have neglected human development in favor of physical and economic resources, a flawed logic which has been influenced by the methods and principles of "scientific" inquiry. From this premise, Brown advocates participatory research as a potential tool for mobilizing local human resources to deal with local realities. Participatory research promotes empowerment, equity, and self-reliance.

Griffith, W., & Cristarella, M.C. Participatory research: Should it be a new methodology for adult education? In J.A. Niema (Ed.) *Viewpoints on Adult Education Research.* Columbus, Ohio: Eric Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education.

This article raises some of the questions surrounding participatory research. What is it? Who is doing it? How does the methodology compare with established research methodologies? Is it of such potential that all adult educators should be taught to carry it out?

Meyer, R.J. (1996). *Stories from the heart: Teachers and students researching their literacy lives.* Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

This book explores the use of narratives for understanding literacy. We all have stories, and these narratives of our past, our goals, and our lived experiences can serve as powerful tools for conceptualizing and connecting with our "literacy lives."

While the book concentrates upon children, teachers, and the classroom setting, it is an excellent resource for any literacy tutor, learner, or professional. It demonstrates the strength of storytelling and narratives as a teaching and learning tool, and provides readers with a new way of understanding literacy—not as a mechanistic skill of recognizing words and remembering grammar, but as a personal skill that shapes people's thinking about themselves and about the world in which they live.

Internet resources

Action Research on the Web (http://www.cchs.su.edu.au/AROW) is a one-semester course for graduate students and professions offered by the Faculty of Health Sciences, The University of Sydney, Australia. Although much of the information available at this site is specific to the course being offered, you may also access the Action Research Electronic Reader which gives you on-line access to articles on the theory and practice of PAR. Also available are links to other action research sites on the Web.

PARnet at Cornell University (http://www.PARnet.org/index2.cfm) serves an international group of practitioners involved in doing social research for social change. "PARchives" links to scholarly publications on-line and the "Toolbox" provides access to practical articles such as "Frequently Asked Questions about Action Research" and "PAR: Traditions and Major Assumptions" which includes an extensive bibliography on PAR.

Community Development

Resources in print

Ewert, D. M. (1993). Rural literacy and community development: Building the link. *Literacy Practitioner*, Rural Literacy Issue, 1(2). Literacy Volunteers of New York State.

Two different approaches to literacy education are discussed in this article along with an overview of the first two phases of the Rural Literacy Initiative. Available from the LVA, NYS office in Ithaca - contact Chip Carlin (607) 273-0634.

Moore, A.B., & Brooks, R. (1996). *Transforming your community: Empowering for change*. Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing Co.

This book focuses upon organizing adult groups into teams and preparing them for development initiatives in their communities. The authors discuss the different forms of community and economic development that might be pursued by groups, and then provides a number of strategies, resources, and practical methods for educating adult learners for this process.

Internet Resources

The Rural Literacy and Community Development Initiative Homepage (http://www.cals.cornell.edu:80/cals/dept/education/larson/lva1.html) describes the Rural Literacy Initiative, a program that seeks to forge a link between adult literacy and community development, and provides links to the organizations that have collaborated in its development including LVA, NYS, the Departments of Education and Human Service Studies at Cornell University, CaRDI, Cornell Cooperative Extension, the Rural Clearinghouse, and the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development.

The Literacy and Community Development Home Page (http://www.cals.cornell.edu:80/cals/dept/education/larson/lva2.html) is designed to be a resource for practitioners, researchers, and policy-makers interested in community development and adult literacy issues.

The Cornell University Community and Rural Development Institute (CaRDI) (http://www.cals.cornell.edu/dept/cardi/) is a network of over 350 faculty, research, and extension specialists, which provides research, education, and policy analysis on critical community and rural development issues. On this homepage, links are provided to programs and publications on a variety of topics related to community development such as economic development, human development, and local government and leadership.

The Community Development Society (http://www.infoanalytic.com/cds/), which offers a global perspective, provides leadership to professionals and citizens across the spectrum of community development. On-line resources include information on membership, publications, conferences, certification, and chapter activities.

Special thanks to the members of the Education 685 class at Cornell University, Spring 1997, for sharing their collection of resources in "Context in Content, Training Resources for Literacy and Community Education."

Community Development Listservs

Listservs are subscriber-only e-mail "discussion" groups that focus on specific topics. These online groups unite people with common interests and provide a place to raise questions, interact with colleagues, learn about programs, and share information. Once you subscribe, you will receive and be able to send e-mail messages to and from the group. Many listservs have moderators who help facilitate the ongoing discussion. The following are three listservs on topics related to literacy and community development. They offer an easy way to become an active participant in the ongoing dialogue.

To join the following discussion groups, simply send the sign-up message to the e-mail addresses indicated. In return, you will receive a "welcome" message which will give you guidelines for using the listserv, and a list of other useful commands. For more information on listservs, including popular commands, consult American On Line (Keyword: Mailing Lists), or "Discussion Lists: Mailing List Manager Commands" by James Milles of the St. Louis University Law Library, available on the World Wide Web at http://lawlib.slu.edu/TRAINING/MAILSER.HTM#more.

Popular Education Listserv (Rutgers University) To subscribe, send the message (leave subject line blank, if possible) "subscribe pop_ed *your e-mail address*" to Majordomo@email.rutgers.edu.

Critical Education Listserv (University of Arizona) To subscribe, send the message (leave subject line blank, if possible) "subscribe criticaled *yourfirstname yourlastname*" to LISTSERV@LISTSERV.ARIZONA.EDU.

Participatory Action Research Listserv (Cornell University) To subscribe, send the message (leave subject line blank, if possible) "subscribe par-announce-l (L, not 1) *yourfirstname yourlastname*" to listproc@cornell.edu.

Impacting Communities Through Literacy *continued from page 5*

Affiliates include settlement houses and store fronts, museums, libraries, and after-school literacy and arts programs. They support agencies for the homeless, the mentally and physically-disabled, ex-offenders, and children of alcohol and substance abusers—a range that vividly demonstrates the Network's potential for reaching those ordinarily disenfranchised. For more information contact CTCNet, EDC, 55 Chapel Street, Newton, MA 02158 (617) 969-7100; e-mail: ctcnet@edc.org; or access CTCNet's Homepage on the WWW (http://www.ctcnet.org).

El Barrio Popular Education Program
New York, New York

El Barrio Popular Education Program is an independent, nonprofit, community-based organization providing comprehensive educational services to approximately 70 Latino adults in New York City. The program integrates technology, including computer and video instruction, with literacy and basic education in Spanish and ESL. Students also participate in leadership development and health education workshops and economic development projects that help supplement their income while training them to operate small businesses.

The approach is community-based and student-generated, with curriculum units centering on issues of importance to students' lives. Students at El Barrio Popular Education Program are trained to be researchers and teachers working in the community and in the program. Many participants have received licenses in video making, and some are teaching and running projects in the program. Approximately half of the paid staff and half of the Board of Directors are women who are program participants or graduates.

For more information, contact El Barrio Popular Education Program, 1948 First Avenue, New York, NY 10029 (212) 348-0292, Fax (212) 831-3122.

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